

**United States Standards for Grades  
of Ocean Perch Fillets and  
Rockfish Fillets**

**§ 263.301 Product description.**

The product described in this part consists of clean, whole, wholesome fillets, cut away from either side of the ocean perch or rockfish. Species of ocean perch and rockfish will be determined by common or market name as published in the most recent edition of "The Seafood List: FDA's Guide to Acceptable Names for Seafood Sold in Interstate Commerce," which are packaged in accordance with good commercial practice and are maintained at temperatures necessary for the preservation of the product. The product may contain bones when it is clearly labeled on the principle display panel to show that the product contains bones.

**§ 263.302 Grades of fillets.**

(a) "U.S. Grade A" is the quality of product that possess good flavor and odor; and for those factors of quality which are rated in accordance with the scoring system outlined in this part the total score is not less than 85 points.

(b) "U.S. Grade B" is the quality of product that possess at least reasonably good flavor and odor; and for those factors of quality which are rated in accordance with the scoring system outlined in this part the total score is not less than 70 points.

(c) "Substandard" is the quality of product that fails to meet the requirements of U.S. Grade B.

**§ 263.304 Product forms.**

(a) *Types:*  
 (1) Fresh.  
 (2) Frozen, solid pack; glazed or unglazed.  
 (3) Frozen individually; glazed or unglazed.

(b) *Styles:*  
 (1) Skin on.  
 (2) Skinless.

(c) *Bone classifications.*  
 (1) Practically boneless fillet.  
 (2) Bone-in (fillet cut, with bones.)

**§ 263.306 Recommended weights and dimensions.**

(a) The net weights and dimensions of packaged ocean perch fillets and rockfish fillets are not incorporated in the grades of the finished product since net weights and dimensions, as such, are not factors of quality for the purpose of these grades.

(b) It is recommended that the net weight of the packaged ocean perch fillets and rockfish fillets be not less than 12 ounces and not over 10 pounds and that the product be classified as large, medium, or small as classified by common commercial size classification practices.

**§ 263.311 Ascertaining the grade.**

The grade of the product is ascertained by examination in the frozen, thawed, and cooked states. The following factors of quality are evaluated in ascertaining the grade of the product: Flavor and odor, appearance, size, workmanship defects, and character. These factors are rated in the following manner:

(a) *Flavor and odor.* This factor is rated directly by sensoric evaluation. Score points are not assessed (see § 263.312).

(b) *Appearance, size, workmanship defects, and character.* The relative importance of these factors is expressed numerically on the scale of 100. The maximum number of points that may be given each of these factors are:

FACTORS	POINTS
Appearance	15
Size	20
Absence of defects	50
Character	15
Total possible score	100

**§ 263.312 Evaluation of the unscored factor of flavor and odor.**

(a) *Good flavor and odor.* "Good flavor and odor" (essential requirement for a Grade A product) means that the fish flesh has good flavor and odor characteristic of the species and is free from staleness, and off-flavors and off-odors of any kind.

(b) *Reasonably good flavor and odor.* "Reasonably good flavor and odor" (minimum requirement for a Grade B product) means that the fish flesh may be somewhat lacking in good flavor and odor; and is free from objectionable off-flavors and off-odors of any kind.

**§ 263.313 Evaluation and rating of the scored factors: appearance, size, absence of defect, and character.**

The essential variations in quality within each factor that is scored are so described that the value may be ascertained for each factor and expressed numerically. Point deductions are allotted for each degree or amount of variation within each factor. The net score for each factor is the maximum points for that factor less the sum of the deduction-points within the factor. The total score for the product is the sum of the net scores for the four scored factors.

**§ 263.314 Appearance.**

(a) The factor of appearance refers to the color of the fish flesh, and to the degree and amount of surface dehydration of the frozen product.

(b) For the purpose of rating the factor of appearance the schedule of deduction-points in Table I apply. Fillets that receive 15 deduction points for the factor of appearance shall not be graded above Substandard regardless of the total score for the product. This is a limiting rule.

**Table I - Score Deductions for Appearance**

COLOR OF PRODUCT	DEDUCTION POINTS
No discoloration	0
Slight yellowing	4
Moderate yellowing	9
Excessive yellowing and/or rusting	15

**Score Deductions for Dehydration**

DEGREE DEHYDRATION FROZEN PRODUCT	SURFACE AREA AFFECTED (PERCENT)		DEDUCTION POINTS
	Over -	Not over -	
Slight - Shallow and not color making	0	1	0
	1	50	2
	50	100	5
Moderate - Deep, but just deep enough to easily scrape with fingernail.	0	25	5
	25	50	10
	50	100	15
Excessive - Deep dehydration not easily scraped off.	0	10	10
	10	100	15

**§ 263.315 Size.**

(a) The factor of size refers to the degree of freedom from undesirably small fillets.

(b) For the purpose of rating the factor of size, the schedule of deduction points in Table II apply. Fillets that receive 20 deduction points for this factor shall not be graded above Substandard regardless of the total score for the product. This is a limiting rule.

**TABLE II-SCORE DEDUCTIONS FOR SIZE OF FILLETS  
(Deduction points)**

NUMBER OF FILLETS PER POUND	NUMBER OF SMALL FILLETS OR PIECES OF FILLETS											
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
<b>UNDER TWO OUNCES IN WEIGHT</b>												
2.....	0	5	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
3.....	0	5	10	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
4.....	0	4	7	10	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
5.....	0	4	7	10	15	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
6.....	0	3	5	9	15	20	...	...	...	...	...	...
<b>UNDER ONE OUNCE IN WEIGHT</b>												
7.....	0	5	10	15	20	20	20	...	...	...	...	...
8.....	0	5	10	15	20	20	20	20	...	...	...	...
9.....	0	0	5	10	15	20	20	20	20	...	...	...
10.....	0	0	5	10	15	20	20	20	20	20	...	...
11.....	0	0	4	10	15	20	20	20	20	20	20	...
12.....	0	0	0	7	10	15	15	20	20	20	20	20
13.....	0	0	0	4	7	10	15	15	15	2	20	20
14.....	0	0	0	1	4	7	10	15	15	15	20	20
15 or more.....	0	0	0	0	1	4	7	10	15	15	15	20

**§ 263.316 Workmanship defects.**

(a) The factor of "workmanship defects" refers to the degree of freedom from improper packing, cutting and trimming imperfections, blemishes, and bones. Evaluation for the defect of improper packing is made on the frozen product. Evaluation of the defects of cutting and trimming, blemishes, and bones are made on the thawed product.

(1) *Improper packing.* "Improper packing" means poor arrangement of fillets, presence of voids, depressions, frost, and the imbedding of packaging material into the frozen fish flesh.

(2) *Cutting and trimming imperfections.* "Cutting and trimming imperfections" means that the fillets have ragged edges, tears, holes, or are otherwise improperly cut or trimmed.

(3) *Blemish.* "Blemish" means an instance of blood spot, bruise, black belly lining or membrane, fin, scales, or extraneous material. Blemish also means an instance of skin on skinned fillets.

(i) One "instance of blood spot" is one of such size and prominence as to be considered objectionable.

(ii) An "instance of bruise" consists of a bruise not less than 1/2 square inch and not more than 1-1/2 square inches in area; each bruise larger than 1-1/2 square inches is considered as two instances of bruise.

(iii) An "instance of black belly lining or membrane" is any piece of black-belly lining or membrane not less than 1/2-inch and not more than 1-inch in length; each additional 1/2-inch length of individual pieces of black belly lining or membrane longer than 1-inch is considered as an instance.

(iv) Each aggregate area of identifiable fin or parts of any fin up to 1 square inch is considered as one "instance of fin".

(v) One "instance of scales" is an aggregate area of scales greater than 1/2 square inch per fillet.

(vi) One "instance of skin" consists of one piece of skin at least 1/2 square inch in area; except that any skin patches larger than 1-1/2 square inches are considered as two instances of skin.

(4) *Bones.* One "instance of bones" means an objectionable bone or group of bones occupying or contacting a circular area up to 1 square inch. An objectionable bone is any

bone of such size and rigidity as to remain objectionable after cooking. Bones that will soften or disintegrate after cooking are not considered objectionable. In fillets intended to contain bones, the presence of bones will not be considered a workmanship defect.

(b) For the purpose, of rating the factor of absence of defects the schedule of deduction points in Table III applies.

**Table III-Score Deductions for Workmanship Defects**

SUBFACTORS	METHOD OF DETERMINING SUBFACTOR SCORE	DEDUCTION POINTS
Improper packing	Slight defects, not noticeably affecting the product's appearance	0
	Moderate defects, noticeably affecting the product's appearance	2
	Excessive defects, seriously affecting product's appearance	4
Blemishes	Number of blemishes per 1 lb. of product when there are 6 or less fillets per lb.:	
	Over 0 not over 2	0
	Over 2 not over 4	2
	Over 4 not over 5	4
	Over 5 not over 6	7
	Over 6 not over 7	10
	Over 7 not over 8	15
	Over 8 not over 9	20
	Over 9 not over 10	30
	Over 10 not over 11	40
	Over 11	50
	Number of blemishes per 1 lb. of product when there are 7 to 12 (inclusive) fillets per lb.:	
	Over 0 not over 3	0
	Over 3 not over 5	2
	Over 5 not over 6	4
	Over 6 not over 7	7
	Over 7 not over 8	10
	Over 8 not over 9	15
	Over 9 not over 10	20
Over 10 not over 11	30	
Over 11 not over 12	40	
Over 12	50	

	Number of blemishes per 1 lb. of product when there are 13 or more fillets per lb.:	0
	Over 0 not over 6	2
	Over 6 not over 8	4
	Over 8 not over 9	7
	Over 9 not over 10	10
	Over 10 not over 11	15
	Over 11 not over 12	20
	Over 12 not over 13	30
	Over 13 not over 14	40
	Over 14 not over 15	50
	Over 15	
Bones	Number of instances per lb. of product when there are 6 or less fillets per lb.:	
	Over 0 not over 4	0
	Over 4 not over 5	1
	Over 5 not over 6	2
	Over 6 not over 7	5
	Over 7 not over 8	12
	Over 8 not over 9	20
	Over 9 not over 10	35
	Over 10	50
	Number of instances per lb. of product when there are 7 or more fillets per lb.:	
	Over 0 not over 3	0
	Over 3 not over 4	1
	Over 4 not over 5	2
	Over 5 not over 6	5
	Over 6 not over 7	12
	Over 7 not over 8	20
	Over 8 not over 9	35
	Over 9	50
	Cutting and trimming	Slight defects, scarcely noticeable
Moderate defects noticeable but not affecting the usability of any fillets		4
Excessive defects impairing: (a) the usability of up to 1/4 of the total number of fillets		8
(b) the usability of over 1/4 but not more than 1/2 of the total number of fillets		16
(c) the usability of over 1/2 of the total number of fillets		40

**§ 263.317 Character.**

(a) *General.* The factor of character refers to the tenderness and moistness of the cooked fish flesh.

(b) For the purpose of rating the factor of character, the schedule of deduction points in Table IV apply. Fillets that receive 15 deduction-points for the factor of character shall not be graded above Substandard regardless of the total score for the product. This is a limiting rule.

**Table IV-Score Deductions for Character**

TEXTURE OF THE COOKED FISH	POINT DEDUCTIONS
1. Texture:	
(a) Firm, but tender and moist	0
(b) Slightly tough, dry, and/or fibrous, or mushy	4
(c) Moderately tough, rubbery, and/or fibrous	8
(d) Excessively tough, rubbery, and/or fibrous	15

**§ 263.321 Cooking in a suitable manner.**

"Cooking in a suitable manner" shall mean that the product is cooked as follows: Place the thawed unseasoned product into a boilable film-type pouch. Fold the pouch over a suspension bar and clamp it in place so that a loose seal is maintained. Immerse the pouch and its contents in boiling water and cook until the internal temperature of the fillets reaches 160°F (about 20 minutes).

**§ 263.325 Tolerances for certification of officially drawn samples.**

The sample rate and grades of specific lots shall be certified in accordance with Part 260 Subpart A of this chapter (Regulations Governing Processed Fishery Products).

**§ 263.331 Score sheet for ocean perch and rockfish fillets.**

Label.....  
 Size and kind of container.....  
 Container mark or identification.....  
 Size of lot.....  
 Number of packages per master carton.....  
 Size of sample.....  
 Type of over wrap.....  
 Actual net weight: -----(lb.) -----(kg.).....

FACTOR	SCORE POINTS	SAMPLE SCORE
Appearance	15	
Size	20	
Absence of defects	50	
Character	15	
Total	100	

Flavor and odor.....

Final grade.....